DRG LEARNING, EVALUATION, AND RESEARCH (DRG-LER) ACTIVITY

MEDIA: THE POLITICS OF CAPTURE, CAPACITY, AND CONSUMPTION

TASKING N056

2017 DRG-LER IMPACT EVALUATION CLINIC

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Submitted to:
Morgan Holmes

Submitted by:
NORC at the University of Chicago
Attention: Renee Hendley, Program Manager
Bethesda, MD 20814
Tel: 301634-9489; E-mail: Hendley-Renee@norc.org

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ACRONYMS

EGAP	Evidence on Governance and Policy
MSP	Media Strengthening Program
MP	Member of Parliament
NORC	National Opinion Research Center (NORC at the University of Chicago)
SES	Socioeconomic Status
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
YOP	Youth Opportunities Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY[1]

The purpose of this paper is to provide an understanding of the main academic findings on the subjects of (i) media capture, (ii) media capacity, (iii) media exposure/consumption effects on citizens, and (iv) media exposure/consumption effects on state actors. We focus where possible on academic findings in non-democratic or low-income settings, but also draw on literature regarding industrialized advanced democratic settings (where the bulk of the literature focuses). We also discuss non-academic policy work regarding media programming where academic work is absent. We conclude by outlining specific challenges to boosting the media and advocacy environment as well as studying the effect of media exposure on citizens' attitudes and behaviors.

A rich and professional media environment is a foundational factor in facilitating democracy. On the one hand, media coverage of government allows citizens to become informed, such that they may base attitudes and actions on that information. On the other hand, media coverage of society allows government to learn the preferences of citizens. Given elections are few and far between, then, media has a critical role as a regular informational intermediary between government and citizens on policy preferences and policy outcomes.

The prevailing wisdom holds that media can influence audience preferences, or at minimum, promote salience of some issues over others. For this reason, it comes as no surprise that government actors aim to capture the media in an effort to control the citizenry. In non-democracies, state-run broadcasters can simply become the mouthpiece of the government. In low-income countries, there may be few private media outlets to rival state dominance. Those that exist may have limited financial resources or capacity to provide professional journalistic content. Media outlets can come to rely on government resources to survive and citizens are left with few options, especially where literacy and poverty constrain citizens to rely mostly on radio rather than newspapers or internet. In low-income, non-democracies, therefore, it can become easy for government to capture the small number of independent media sources as well.

A number of new policy initiatives aim to enhance either (i) the capacity of the media (e.g., journalism training programs), and/or (ii) the capacity of citizen or government actors' advocacy in order to improve information covered by the media. In the last decade, Western aid organizations such as USAID have funded the major expansion of local language national public radio in rural Islamic areas of Africa - Northern Mali, Chad, Sudan, Niger and other areas without radio signals (USAID Radio Expansion). The evidence of media capacity building has been mixed, but in part because evaluations of media practitioner and sector-level outcomes with rigorous causal leverage have not been uncommon. We offer insight from impact evaluations of vocational training programs as a useful approach for studying media capacity building activities.

Last, there is mixed evidence regarding the effect of media exposure on citizens. When citizens only have access to state broadcasting, it solidifies incumbent rule versus when citizens have access to alternative media sources. When citizens have choices over media sources, and receive different signals, they may become less certain and confident in their

[1] This evidence review was prepared by Kristin Michelitch and Keith Weghorst (Department of Political Science, Vanderbilt University).

own views (“cross-pressured”). Alternatively, citizens may self-select into media that reinforces their existing opinions and behaviors. Ultimately, however, it remains a point of hope that an increase in the number and quality of mass media outlets will improve knowledge, affect attitudes, and ultimately catalyze political participation.

1. Introduction

The importance of a rich and professional media environment is widely recognized as a key ingredient of functioning democracy. The goal of this document is to review some of the existing literature on the topic of media, especially with regards to media in low-income and/or non-democratic contexts of the kind in which USAID programming may be endeavoring to improve media.

While measures of democracy are positively correlated with a freer and more robust media environment, it is hard to disentangle from the many other factors that are also correlated with general modernization that are likely mutually-reinforcing (Teorell 2010). Promoting a rich and professional media environment to strengthen democracy stems from the presumption that the media facilitates communications between citizens/civil society and state actors (e.g., elected representatives, bureaucrats, service providers, and judicial bodies). By facilitating this two-way communications, state actors should represent the will of the people and the people should be able to hold state actors accountable for acting on the will of the people.

First, by investigating and reporting on state actors and important government outcomes (e.g., public service delivery) to citizens the media informs the citizenry. It also creates “common knowledge” between citizens and state actors that citizens hold information about state actors. Media can provide transparency on elites’ behavior such that they know citizens have the potential to scrutinize it. Armed with information about state actors, citizens may hold government accountable through vote choice in the next election, or through other behaviors between elections such as contacting representatives or publicly demonstrating.

Second, by investigating and reporting on the actions of citizens and civil society, the media informs state actors of the needs and preferences of citizens and civil society. Elections are a “blunt tool” where citizens support a bundle of policies and promises represented by one candidate or party. It thus can be difficult for state actors to understand the specific needs and demands of citizens based solely on vote shares of candidates or parties. Media provides information for state actors to learn about the will of the public. The presumption is that state actors will fear disciplining in the next election if they do not act to reflect the will of the public. Together these two dynamics capture the accountability “watch-dog” function of mass media.

Media may also serve an educational function for citizens by promoting democratic values and culture, especially where newly introduced as in many low-income countries in the rural areas. Consider that in traditional societies without mass media, the village chief or other local elites often paid a courier to go on an information errand to access or hunt down information. From the start, such elites control information by choosing what information is worth investigating. However, the elites then choose how to “spin” and disseminate the information in the village. Thus, the village chief and other elites have tremendous power to color or influence information as it trickles down to ordinary citizens, and therefore citizens’ attitudes and actions.

When mass media is first introduced into traditional and highly localized societies, citizens become more aware of a world outside of their own and a set of potential opinions or choices

that other individuals further afield are making (Lerner 1958). Especially when mass media may be accessed individually and independently, such access acts to increase autonomy and decrease citizens' reliance on traditional elites (e.g., village chiefs, religious leaders) for information used to develop political attitudes and actions (Woodward and Roper1950, Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955). Pye (1963) even went so far as to say “it was the pressure of communications which brought about the downfall of traditional societies” (p3).

In addition to equitable access to media that might allow for autonomous participation (Collier 1982), many prominent theorists have stressed the value of pluralistic media sources representing diverse and alternative viewpoints as foundational to democracy (Dahl 1973). As Mill (1989) relates, public confrontation of diverse views is a necessary condition of democracy because exposure to the diversity of opinions as a society allows for the tolerance of diverse opinions and development of reasoned and “improved” decisions. As explained in a subsequent section, however, it is difficult to evaluate such claims with hard data because it is hard to isolate and test the effect of a single media stream in the long-term.

Moreover, the media may not serve this ideal function for a few notable reasons, addressed in the following sections. First, given the presumed power of the media to affect its audiences, state actors (or other powerful elites) often “capture” the media to propagate biased information in line with their self-interest. Such media, rather than promoting democratic values and culture, may instead serve as a mouthpiece for authoritarianism and repression of democratic culture. Second, the media often lack the physical capacity to reach citizens and when they do, they face serious challenges in gaining credibility with citizens. They commonly lack professionalism and capacity to report accurate information, and few civil society and political advocates generate content for the media. Third, media may not sufficiently motivate citizens, civil society, or state actors to take actions to improve state actors’ performance or representation of the citizens’ key policy preferences. Instead, citizens may not expose themselves to media, may select into media that confirms existing viewpoints, or may not use the information to modify attitudes or behavior. We discuss these possibilities in the subsequent sections, as well as any programs or efforts undertaken to steer media into its “ideal” role in a democracy.

2. Media Capture

Scholars have long documented state (or other elite) capture of the mass media in an attempt to sway public opinion, win approval, and foster the cohesion of specific identities (e.g., Voltmer 2013, Gunther 2000, Anderson 1983, Weber 1976, Lerner 1958, Pye1963, Siebert et al. 1956). Political elites in both democracies and non-democracies harness the media to cultivate support among citizens (e.g., Lawson and Hughes 2004, Boas and Hidalgo 2011, McMillan and Zoido 2004, Durante and Knight 2012, Weber 1976, Hobsbawm 1990, Walker and Orttung 2014). Indeed, Djankov et al. (2003)'s 97-country study reveals that state media capture is widespread: the state controls, on average, 72% of radio stations, 60% of television channels, and 29% of newspapers. Thus, some broadcasting mediums may be more easily captured than others.

Further, Djankov et al. show that in non-democracies, the state typically controls significantly more media outlets, and media freedoms are significantly lower. The number and quality of private media broadcasters can be low, presumably due to lack of finances and high-quality staff. Moreover, state broadcasting, despite an obvious history of pro-regime bias, is often the source most trusted by citizens, perhaps due to its relatively higher quality and professionalism (Moehler and Singh 2011).

Scholars have theorized the larger the number of independent media organizations, the less the government has the ability to capture them all (Besley and Prat 2006). However, the media is the most important target of capture. McMillan and Zoido (2004)'s study of Peru shows, media broadcasters receive larger government bribes than the judiciary or other societal actors because the media simply reaches many more people. Media capture plays a very key role during non-democratic regime transitions via military coup, the most frequent form of transition to non-democracy (Svolik 2009). Putschists can improve their chances of survival by capturing the media in order to squash potential dissent and opposition (Singh 2014, Luttwak 1969). The media is easiest to capture when the number and capacity of broadcasters is more limited. The post-transition period serves as a critical juncture for re-defining relations between the media, the state, and society (Young 2012, Lawson 2002, Hallin and Mancini 2012).

State capture can even occur in more local, decentralized levels of government, as Boas and Hidalgo (2011) illustrate in their study of radio capture in Brazil. They examine politicians that barely win and barely lose city council positions that are arguably similar. Winning more than doubles the probability of obtaining a community radio license. Further comparing those who acquired the license before a subsequent election versus later, they show that having a radio station prior to the election increases the vote-share and probability of winning.

3. Media Capacity

Mass media in the developing world faces a number of intersecting capacity-related problems. First, the persistent infrastructural and human development problems in these settings impact the strength of media's reach and the type of media citizens can access. These problems are particularly severe in rural areas (Bratton and van de Walle 1997, Hyden, Leslie, and Ogundimu 2003). Rural Africa in particular is characterized by weak physical and information communication infrastructure. Many villages lack access to paved roads, radio signals, cell phone signal, or electricity.

Physical infrastructure limitations combined with poverty inhibits access to newsprint, television, and electronic media, rendering radio one of the main diffusers of information. Although usually used as the mouthpiece of the state during the Cold War era, media has substantially liberalized in the last two decades in many countries (Freedom House/RSF). According to a Gallup poll conducted across 23 African countries between 2006-8, radio is the most important medium for the mass media across Africa. 75% of respondents cite radio (national and international) as the most important in keeping well informed about events in their country (English 2008, Moehler and Singh 2011).

Cost of equipment - a radio device and batteries - nonetheless restricts many from radio access even if signals exist. For this reason, Western aid organizations such as USAID have funded the major expansion of radio in the last decade. This includes local language national public radio in rural Islamic areas of Africa - Northern Mali, Chad, Sudan, Niger and other areas without radio signals (USAID Radio Expansion). USAID writes that radio expansion programming aims to strengthen national versus ethnic or religious identity, improves access to health information, promotes teacher training, facilitates conflict management, encourages water and resource management, spurs economic development, and improves gender equity.

Increasing the broadcast signal of radio—or improving access to media of multiple types generally— however, leaves several other unresolved problems and potentially exacerbates them. Truly enhancing capacity of the media environment means addressing two intersecting challenges: providing citizens enhanced access to information and improving the ability of professionalized private media to provide high-quality information to citizens. The remaining section addresses this latter issue: improving the professionalism of journalists themselves.

There exists little research that experimentally analyzes the impact of media capacity building on the quality of media, its effectiveness, or the professional outcomes of trained journalists. As such, we focus on two issues related to this inquiry: (1) non-experimental insight on strategies for improving media professionalism and (2) experimental evaluations of vocational, skills-training programs in developing country settings.

BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF MEDIA PRACTITIONERS

Even as access to media and media penetration has expanded in the developing world, the quality of media resources has lagged behind; these problems are compounded by a rapidly

changing information environment in which many traditional media houses cannot adapt. The suboptimal state of journalism in settings like sub-Saharan Africa is well documented (African Media Barometer 2015, Nyamnjoh 2005, Wasserman 2010) and the challenges media increasingly faces spread across regions (IREX 2017). Trust in public media worldwide has declined to historic lows—only 43% of citizens trust media, according to a recent report drawn from 28 developed and developed countries (Edelman 2017). The economic model by which media in the developing world functions is challenging: there is little revenue generated from advertising, cover prices are insufficient, and regular subscriptions are uncommon. In many countries, over 25% of journalists operating on a freelance basis and without significant professional training (African Media Barometer 2015).

An array of "media development" strategies have emerged in this environment with aims of at improving journalists, their skills, and the content they collect and produce. USAID is a significant contributor to media assistance (Kumar 2006). It is also estimated that over one billion dollars are also spent per year by organizations outside of the United States to support media (Becker and Vlad 2005a). The focus of these programs has been enhancing standards of reporting and practice which are derived from the traditions of Western media, with a particular focus on training journalists (McCurdy and Power 2007). In spite the investment in these programs, their planning and implementation are often single-shot and poorly or not evaluated at all (AMDI 2007). They also are criticized for targeting short-term objectives rather than a program strategy that would promote and detect long-term change (Jones and Waisbord 2010). Training most commonly operates through existing non-governmental and media organizations, rather than educational or vocational institutions because of costs of university-based programs.

Views on effectiveness of such training programs are thus generally impressionistic of the potential of these activities. Reports to date primarily hone in on the impact of media capacity-building on program outcomes in the form of two primary outcomes: (1) reporting quality and (2) career advancement opportunities and salary and professional benefits. There have been recent strides moving past these conventions led by BBC Media Action, linking outcomes from different media segments—practitioners, organizations, content, and audiences—to one another. Nonetheless, attention on reporting quality and career advancement remains the norm.

Improving Media Content

The most promising returns from media assistance and training programs have been in the skill of journalists and the quality of media content and coverage. This is particularly true when focused on specific topical issues of importance on the country-setting and matched by calls from domestic stakeholders for media training programs to be "more relevant" (AMDI 2006, 82). Journalists trained in one-off training programs in Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda and Zambia self-report greater ability to report on "government budgets, international trade, development and macroeconomics" (Schiffrin 2010, 325). Journalists in other settings have demonstrated better understanding of the complex political issues (Becker and Vlad 2005b), contemporary topics like environmental politics (Jallov and Lwange-Ntale 2006, Thomas 2012), and health outcomes (Martinez-Cajas et al. 2008). Journalism trainings programs have also shown simultaneous improvements in media topics covered and quality of that coverage (ARD, Inc.

2004). USAID's Media Strengthening Program (MSP) in Mozambique had success on these dimensions as well. Journalists acquired basic skills necessary for producing media and adapted to emergent digital patterns of media (Abott et al. 2015). There is evidence of program success with trainings emphasizing participatory journalistic techniques from Rede Globo Rio de Janeiro as well (Frazâo and Brasil 2013).

In more constrained political settings like Rwanda, leaders of the private media sector report positive gains in terms of reporting quality. Still, more professional journalism has not opened the civic space sufficiently to report critically on government performance and there still remain doubts regarding the rigor with which analytical information is disseminated (Kayumba and Kimonya 2006). Similar lessons emerge from post-conflict settings, where attempts to focus on too many media content objectives at the same time can lead to less content clarity and consequently less program success (Spurk 2002).

Improving Media Careers

The second factor used to evaluate media assistance programs is career advancement and professional benefits. There does appear to be some impact on career advancement. Results from a Nigerian journalism training program showed that, of re-contacted training participants, some 30% were subsequently promoted by their employer and about 25% of them took new jobs with different media companies (Colmery et. al 2009, 30). Participants in Panos South Asia's training program attained career gains of similar levels (Pradhan 2007). In Mozambique, participation in the training program offered by USAID's MSP opened opportunities for individuals and, in some cases, the specific MSP was cited as a characteristic evaluated in the hiring process (Abott et al. 2015). Advancements from other settings have been more limited in scope—like moving from junior or assistant positions to more senior ones (Colmery et al. 2009, 67). Change in higher levels of management of media firms may not occur (Thomas 2012). In environments, where gender norms bias the formal employment sector against women, female journalists who receive training have reported both greater capacity and frustration with limits on advancement opportunities (Berger 2001). Research from more developed settings suggest the findings may be specific to settings with low quality journalism (Hayakawa 2005).

While training may appear to improve career prospects, gains in terms of salary and professional benefits are limited. In Nigeria, Ghana, and Uganda, journalism training participants reported their enlarged skill set was not met with commensurate income change (Colmery et al. 2009). Given the systematic deficiencies of the media sector as a whole, this is not very surprising. The economic model of news media in the developing world makes generating revenue very difficult and it seems unlikely that incremental improvement in reporting quality can have much immediate impact on the financial stakes of large-scale media houses and their employees. Research on the impact of media assistance challenge whether broad change to the media sector as a whole is likely. An analysis of a three-year project funding and supporting print media in Romania, for example, did not lead to systematic change in independent media there (Carothers 1996); similar findings emerged in post-cold war era (Thompson 2000).

Significant advancements to this research agenda have been made in recent years. Departing from the norm of a single round of training, BBC Media Action has developed an "embedded

mentoring model" by which an individual is embedded within an organization over time and is able to provide "bespoke" support to an organization specific to their own needs (Parykn and Whitehead 2015, 15-16). Evaluations of journalist-level outcomes that are robust include research skills, investigation and interviewing skills, higher quality content-formatting and demonstrated skill in the technical aspects of production, including editing, recording, and use of digital platforms (Parykn and Whitehead 2015, 23).

BBC Media action carried out and evaluated 113 media broadcast capacity-building activities from 2011 and 2015. Across these programs, they evaluated five different sets of journalist practitioner skill outcomes: (1), production (2), journalism (3), content-production (4), "softer skills" and (5) self-reinforcing knowledge and change. Parykn and Whitehead (2015) observe that the embedded-mentoring intervention led to higher quality audio and video quality, greater ability to develop sources, planning and creating content and self-reported confidence and teamwork among journalists. There also is evidence skills acquired within targeted activities were subsequently passed on to new members of media agencies (42-47).

LESSONS FROM EVALUATIONS OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING

While this evidence points to the potential of media assistance programming, it is difficult to fully assess its value in absence of impact evaluations on media professionalism. In order to help shed light on this gap in the literature, looking towards such evaluations of vocational training programs more broadly is helpful. The evidence on the performance of these programs is mixed and in developing country contexts, where focus on job skills is common, support for the impact of such programs is weak (Card et al. 2009). Nonetheless, the programs serve as a model for approaching program evaluation. The general thinking behind this research stream—and the donor initiatives it evaluates—arises from the idea that many citizen-level social and economic problems can be traced to an individual's level of professional skill, experience and training. Vocational training programs differ greatly but like media professionalism training, generally incorporate some element of classroom or internship-like skills acquisition; others employ a financial incentive strategy to encourage participation or skills acquisition. Most experimental evaluations are of vocational programs established through an informal, non-governmental, or governmental program outside the framework of schooling, unlike vocational programs in developed countries. Generally, studies focus on outcomes of employment rates, earnings, and individual-level towards participants and towards others (rather than the quality of performance in the resulting vocation, as is common in studies of media assistance programs).

The first set of program types resemble an internship like experience paired with training to enhance skills for internship participants. Jóvenes en Acción (Youth in Action), a program which offered six-month vocational training (half classroom; half "on the job"), also found particularly positive and strong outcomes for female participants. Across most outcome metrics, women made gains similar to or greater than those of men in terms of paid employment, contract employment, wage levels, and hours of work (Attanasio et al. 2011). Perhaps more remarkably, a subsequent follow-up study found that earnings of vocational training participants were 11.8% higher than their peers ten years after the training program and demonstrated the persistence of a number of other positive occupational impacts of Jóvenes en Acción (Attanasio et al. 2015).

Similar programs in other settings like the Dominican Republic have not shown any change in employment levels for training participants (Card et al. 2011). Others have found vocational training impacts the quality of jobs that individuals get, but that the likelihood of getting hired for such jobs is not higher than applicants who did not receive the training (Hirshleifer et al. 2014).

Scholars show that even in post-conflict settings where unemployment is high, vocational training programs can have a substantial impact on social attitudes, economic prospects, and employment. Blattman et. al (2009) study the impact of a Youth Opportunities Program (YOP) implemented as a part of a Northern Uganda economic development initiative. YOP is a cash transfer program in which groups of youth applied for funding in order to implement their own training programs without supervision of the program itself. The authors find that participation in such vocational trainings led to higher rates of employment in skilled sectors; women who participate in the program work outside of the home 50% more hours than women in the control.

Other vocational programs have specifically targeted the potential for job training as a key strategy of political stability in its ability to reduce support for and engagement with violence. INVEST, which was implemented in Helmand, Afghanistan in 2013, offered individuals an array of vocational skills trainings from hand-work with clothing, mechanical and carpentry work, as well as engagement with language and technology. The program was successful in improving economic and social outcomes (though the latter was more mixed), but did not find participation in the program was associated with less propensity to engage in political violence (Mercy Corps 2015). Research in riot-prone Kaduna, Nigeria also reveals mixed results regarding whether vocational training for youth lead to changes in the underlying causes of political violence. In their study, Scacco and Warren (2017) study the impact of positive social contact—religious heterogeneity in a vocational training program—on intergroup antagonism shows no change in prejudicial attitudes towards outgroup members but more generous and less discriminatory actions.

Dasgupta etl al (2012) raise one important concern which pertains to experimental observation of vocational training and, more generally, evaluation programs in which participants self-select into (or, more precisely, out of) them. Researching a women's stitching and tailoring program in India, their study elucidates that individuals that apply into the pool of subjects in which control and treatment conditions are randomized can differ significantly from individuals who do not express interest in the program. Specifically, applicants to the program demonstrated more confidence and risk-tolerance than non-applicants, suggesting that study designs which can observe a broader spectrum of potential program participants—including non-applicants—may improve inferences regarding program efficacy.

An additional concern remaining in the vocational training literature is that most research focuses on training for low socioeconomic status (SES) individuals within countries, often who are from vulnerable populations or in post-conflict settings. For these individuals, shorter-term vocational training may prepare them for the labor market they are entering. To our knowledge, there is not existing experimental research from developing countries on vocational training in professionalized sectors like journalism, for which there already exists university-based preparatory problems and for whom the target population is higher SES. Both point to potential

lessons for shifting vocational training frameworks for impact evaluations to studying media assistance.

4. Citizen Attitudes and Behavior

Scholars of political development and communication believe that the historical development and spread of mass media had a profound impact on the formation of participatory citizenship skills in traditional societies (Pye 1963, Anderson 1991, Lerner 1958, Dahl 1971). This notion fits into a larger literature focusing on the idea that informed citizens are more likely to develop attitudes and take political actions (Neuman 1986, Zaller 1992, Brady et al. 1995, Gerber and Green 2000). However, it is difficult to disentangle the role of the media from other concurrent societal developments such as industrialization or other aspects of modernization, especially with limited historical data (Teorell 2010).

Currently, scholars study the effect of media on citizens' identity, attitudes and behaviors in two main ways (see discussion in Arceneaux 2010). First, they conduct tests involving short-term controlled exposures to particular media, either in a laboratory or internet setting. Often, citizens are directed to read or hear particular media and then asked follow up questions directly after. In such settings, scholars often find profound effects of media affecting identity, attitudes, and behaviors in line with subject matter professed in the media. Such studies have been criticized that they overestimate the effect of media since citizens (1) may not choose to expose themselves to such media in real life, (2) the setting unduly focuses attention to the media, whereas people may give less undivided attention in real life, and (3) the subject pools often involve only undergraduate students.

Second, scholars attempt to gauge the level of natural exposure citizens have to particular media "in the field" (in everyday life). Historically, researchers have asked for self-reports of exposure to particular media and have found meager effects. Such studies have been criticized because citizens cannot often accurately account for how much and of what kind of media they expose themselves to. Further, since people (e.g., conservatives) expose themselves to particular media (e.g., Fox news), it is hard to disentangle whether it is the particular media exposure (e.g., Fox news), or individual characteristics (e.g., conservative ideology) that drive attitudes (e.g., conservative attitudes).

Recently, scholars have attempted to leverage exogenous variation in who can access particular media to assess its effects. For example, scholars have examined otherwise similar citizens living inside and outside the geographic reach of a particular form of mass media (e.g., the spread of internet as in Miner 2015). One trouble with this approach is that there is little knowledge of how much citizens within the geographic reach pay attention to such media. For another example, scholars have examined the impact of delivering the mass media to only certain citizens by (i) directly exposing individuals in-person (e.g., to a radio show via a boombox as in Paluck and Green 2009, through in-person canvassing or meetings as in Gerber and Green 2000, in a minivan as in Conroy-Krutz and Moehler 2015), (ii) giving them means to expose themselves by distributing copies of the media (e.g., newspapers as in Aker et al. 2013), vouchers to access the media (e.g., a voucher to an internet café as in Bailard 2012), or tools to access the media (e.g., a solar crank radio as in Bleck and Michelitch 2017). Such endeavors usually have a policy, as well as academic, aim.

MEDIA EFFECTS ON CITIZEN ATTITUDES

There are two major theories of media effects on attitudes: the “hypodermic needle” theory and the “revisionist exposure-acceptance” theory. According to the hypodermic needle theory, when citizens are exposed to particular media, they are affected by it. Scholars have theorized that exposure to particular media messages affects citizens in two main ways (see reviews in (Iyengar and Simon 2000, Della Vigna and Gentzkow 2010, Stromberg 2015). First, media exposure may increase issue salience by drawing attention to them (McCombs and Shaw 1972, Valentino and Sears 1998, Iyengar and Kinder 1987). This hypothesis is relatively uncontested, with robust support that discussion and behavior reorients to prioritize issues made salient by the news (e.g., Eisensee and Stromberg 2007).

Second, the media may persuade citizens by influencing existing opinions or underlying preferences (Lasswell 1927). The ability of the media to persuade has been heavily contested in advanced democracies, with the vast majority of the research revolving around the USA (see review in DellaVigna and Gentzkow 2010). The revisionist exposure-acceptance model holds that media influence depends not only on levels of exposure, but on individuals' predisposition to accept the media's message contingent on exposure (Zaller 1991). What factors govern exposure? Political interest and sophistication has been found to be positively correlated with exposure to political communications (Converse 1962). Further, people tend to expose themselves to media sources that confirm their pre-existing beliefs and preferences (e.g., Gentzkow and Shapiro 2010).

What factors govern acceptance, given exposure? First, the predisposition to accept media messages may be governed by “capacity for critical scrutiny” due perhaps to limited formal education (Geddes and Zaller 1989) or political socialization regarding diverse political ideologies. (e.g., through civic education or experience with politics) (Stockmann and Gallagher 2011). Worryingly, citizens of low-income countries with a history of authoritarianism may therefore be likely to perceive state broadcasting as credible (Moehler and Singh 2011) and to be acceptant of the media overall (Stockmann and Gallagher 2011).

Second, scholars have long emphasized that the media's ability to affect citizens depends critically on source credibility, whereby citizens may only accept messages from sources they perceive to be credible (Moehler and Singh 2011, Ribeiro 2012, Hovland and Weiss 1951, Gunther and Mughan 2000). However, such research tends to treat citizens' trust of a media source, or all mass media as a whole, as monolithic (e.g., (Moehler and Singh 2011, Miller and Krosnick 2000)). Bleck and Michelitch (2017) find evidence in a radio distribution experiment in Mali that citizens may differentially accept messages coming from the same source, here a putschist controlled national public radio. For example, citizens may only accept information on dimensions along which the source is perceived as credible (e.g., a junta touting nationalism or hoping to delay elections to combat corruption and insurgency) but not dimensions for which the source is not credible (e.g., a junta touting its ability to delivery public services and improve development levels).

A number of additional conditions may amplify or dampen media effects on attitudes according to both major theories of media effects on attitudes: First, if the media source is newly

introduced it may grab more attention and have a larger impact (Stromberg 2015, Weber 1976, Miner 2015, Lerner 1958). Similarly, if the source is revealing new or unexpected information it may enhance its impact, since this may cause more citizens to update their attitudes (Ferraz and Finan 2008, Stromberg 2015). Where citizens are uncertain, new information that increases certainty around an issue can change attitudes more so than when citizens receive new information about an issue for which they are more certain they have an opinion about (Dellavigna and Gentzkow 2010). Lawson and McCann (2005) argue that in emerging democracies we should therefore expect much larger media effects than in advanced democracies because there is much more volatility and uncertainty surrounding politics than in more stable systems.

Second, where there are no (or few) competing media sources to cross-pressure citizens, exposure, especially repeated exposure, to one particular media source may have an especially large impact (Stockmannand Gallagher 2011, Voltmer 2013), perhaps given sufficient repeated exposure (Zaller 1992). Indeed, citizens' initial skepticism about (and rejection of) messages from an untrustworthy source may fade over time, for example, from non-democratic sources (Hovland and Weiss 1951). However, other evidence shows that citizens can continue to reject even the most encompassing media campaigns even after repeated exposure (Jowett and O'Donnell 2012), perhaps because old or unsurprising information no longer allows citizens to update their viewpoints (Ferraz and Finan 2008, Stromberg 2015).

Third, packaging content in culturally powerful music, language, and symbols can evoke emotions, and thereby enhance the impact of media, regardless of the level of acceptance of the verbal messages (Brader 2006, Hallin and Mancini 2012, Bohlman 2008, Askew 2002, Mullainathan et al. 2008). One prominent area of study in this area regards regime efforts to inspire nationalism. First, many have examined how regimes, especially new regimes, tend to recycle a context-specific repertoire of existing ``proto-national symbols'' (Hobsbawm 1990, Gellner 1983) in order to legitimize themselves within a broader historical narrative (Bohlman 2008). Symbology couched in music and language is typical especially in low-income environments, where symbology is paramount in oral tradition (Askew 2002). Amongst older regimes, scholars have focused on media portrayals of external and internal threats to generate nationalism and support for the regime (known as ``rally effects'' in the American literature, as in (Kam and Ramos 2008)). Still, there remains a mixed understanding of the role of non-verbal media cues, emotions, and media effects. (Brader 2006) finds in the American context that generating fear leads citizens to search for and consider new information.

The role of "edutainment" (educational entertainment) has been noted to have strong effects in the developing world (see review in La Ferrara (2016)) because it allows individuals to identify with characters and receive implicit development messages subtly. Messages may affect attitudes even in the thorniest of areas. Two studies in Rwanda, for example, sought to understand whether radio dramas could affect intergroup relations between Hutus and Tutsis after the genocide. In terms of social norms, Paluck (2009), for instance, show that exposure to different messages played on a stereo in listening groups at regular intervals for organized listening groups in a village can have a meaningful impact on prescriptive social norms (how life should be) but not descriptive social norms (how things are) regarding intergroup relations in

Rwanda. Bilali and Vollhardt (2013) show that simply priming a radio drama aimed at increasing perspective taken with regard to the history of interethnic conflict affects individuals' by delivering a questionnaire recorded in the voice of a main character (versus an unknown actor) led to higher levels of historical perspective –taking, less competitive victimhood, and less mistrust toward the ethnic outgroup.

Fourth, evidence shows that more professionalized media sources are more effective. Professionalized messages can be embedded in more captivating consumer-oriented material (Jowett and O'Donnell 2012, Stockmann and Gallagher 2011). Professionalized messages may also be perceived as more credible (Ribeiro 2012, Gunther and Mughan 2000). Kern and Hainmueller (2009) find that exposure to West German television increased regime support among Eastern Germans under the communist dictatorship, arguing that they largely used the media for high-quality entertainment, making life more tolerable under dictatorship.

Fifth, media messages that contradict the reality of everyday life may have little impact. For example, if the state broadcaster claims that livelihoods are improving in an effort to win approval for the government, but livelihoods are not in fact improving, it may be insufficient to convince citizens (Bleck and Michelitch 2017). Indeed, high-performing state media propaganda has been demonstrated to increase approval via media channels, given commensurate improvements in livelihood (e.g., Geddes and Zaller 1989). Problematically, however, when other signals of regime strength are present, it can be difficult to disentangle the role of broadcasting from these other signals (Powell 1967).

Sixth, different mediums from radio to TV to internet may have varying abilities to influence citizens. Citizens may consume different mediums at different rates with differing levels of attention. A medium's effectiveness is highly context dependent. For example, newspapers may be less effective than radio in populations with high illiteracy (Walker and Orttung 2014). Further, more complex mediums involving both audio and visual content (e.g., television, internet) may enhance media effects (Boas 2005). Some have pointed out that such complex mediums may, however be more difficult for broadcasters to control, and may communicate unintended messages to the audience (Curry and Dassin 1982). In low income areas, radio may be by far the most wide-reaching, consumed, and easily produced to a professional standard---and therefore the most effective---broadcasting medium (Moehler and Singh 2011).

MEDIA EFFECTS ON CITIZEN BEHAVIOR

Informed citizens are widely thought to be more likely to be involved in civic and political action (e.g., voting, attending political meetings, contacting officials, protesting), a result that is fairly strong in advanced democracies (Brady et al. 1995, Gerber and Green 2000, Neuman 1986, Zaller 1992). However, scholars have found mixed results of enhanced access to media, broadly defined, on behavior in the developing world (see Pande 2011 for a review).

Vote Choice

Regarding vote choice, there has also been mixed results. There are a number of studies in this category that leverage the geographic reach of media in non-democratic environments, where,

especially in the absence of competing cross-pressuring independent media, state broadcasting is considered to be very powerful (Voltmer 2013). For example, Lawson and McCann (2005)'s study in the lead-up to the 2000 Mexican election found that more exposure to long-standing pro-incumbent broadcasting (compared to newer pro-opposition media) led to better appraisals of the ruling versus opposition parties in the upcoming election. Similarly, Enikolopov et al. (2011) find that the governing party's vote share was higher where the state-run media was unchallenged by other media in the 1999 Russian elections. This finding is not limited to the developing world. Barone et al. (2015) show a similar finding in Italy, an advanced democracy. DellaVigna and Kaplan (2007) find that areas that receive Fox news (a conservative TV broadcaster) in their cable 1996-2000 had a higher vote share for Republicans in the USA.

Many studies on vote choice have been field experimental and have assessed the effect of disseminating mass information to citizens ahead of elections to raise decrease vote choice for poorly performing incumbents. Finan and Ferraz (2008) find that when Brazilian local governments are audited, more corrupt politicians receive reduced vote share, especially where local media markets are strong. The Evidence on Governance and Policy (EGAP) academic-policy-donor working group organized a series of coordinated studies (a “metaketa”) aimed at disseminating incumbent politician scorecards through various means directly prior to elections, with results yet to be announced at the time of writing.

Turnout

Regarding turnout, media effects have also had mixed results. In terms of new media introduction, Prat and Stromberg (2004) show that the introduction of commercial broadcasting in Sweden significantly increased voter information and turnout. Gentzkow et al. (2011) find that the introduction of newspapers in the 1896-1928 period in the USA increases turnout, but that the introduction of radio and television decreases turnout. Gentzkow (2004) shows that the introduction of TV in some geographic locations in the USA between 1960-1996 explains 50% of the decline in voter turnout during those years, with the explanation that such broadcasting coincided with sharp drops in consumption of radio and newspapers, the latter of which provided more political knowledge about elections than the former.

In terms of more controlled media disseminations, Banerjee et al. (2011) find that disseminating pre-election report cards on incumbent performance and candidate qualifications increases turnout. Similarly, Collier and Vicente (2014) find that anti-electoral violence grassroots campaigning increased turnout. Gerber et al. (2009) find that sending free newspaper subscriptions to people in the USA increased turnout (but not knowledge or opinions). However, on the other hand, Chong et al. (2012) find that provision of information on municipal spending and corruption to Mexican voters had no impact. Likewise, Humphreys and Weinstein (2012) find that dissemination of MP performance scorecards to Ugandan voters, respectively, had no impact.

Participation in Improving Active Citizenship in the Community

Scholars have also examined citizen participation in the community to improve development, with mixed results. Keefer and Khemani (2011) find that access to an increasing number of

radio sources was positively correlated with education outcomes in Northern Benin because of parental investment in children's education. In a prominent study, Bjorkman and Svensson (2009) find that providing communities in Uganda with performance information regarding their local health facilities boosted community involvement in monitoring. Lieberman, Posner, and Tsai (2014) find no effect in Kenya of a grassroots media campaign providing many types of learning and activism materials to parents to improve children's learning on parent's community engagement with the schools.

The introduction of some mass media can even depress active citizenship. Olken (2006) finds that access to radio and TV signals in Indonesia is negatively associated with participation in the community. This study dovetails the Kern and Hainmueller and Genzkow (2004) studies that suggest that entertaining, non-political media may substitute for other types of more politically-focused media, and then reduce political behavior.

Moreover, exposure to media could also affect behavior within the community that goes against democratic citizenship. Yanagizawa-Drott (2014), for example, shows that exposure to fear-mongering radio regarding Tutsis as threats increases violence towards Tutsis in the Rwandan genocide.

Promotion of Development in the Community

La Ferrara (2016) reviews the evidence on the effect of mass media on socioeconomic outcomes and norms associated with democratic values (e.g., gender equality). She underscores the value here of "edutainment" (a portmanteau of educational entertainment). Most studies find a positive effect of media expansion on development, similar to the seminal studies of media and modernization (e.g., Pye, Lerner). Cheung (2012), for example, studies community radio access in Cambodia and finds that access improves women's decision-making power, attitudes towards domestic violence, and son preference. La Ferrara et al. (2012) find that access to telenovelas depicting families with lower numbers of children and more marital strife is associated with lower fertility rates, and higher divorce in Brazil. Vaughan et al. (2000) show that exposure to a radio soap opera in Tanzania, which had messages about HIV and family planning contributed to increased knowledge about HIV, as well as sexually responsible behavior (fewer partners and condom use). Also in Tanzania, Bjorvatn et al. (2015) find that exposure to a TV show regarding entrepreneurship elevates entrepreneurial traits and occupational choice both in the short and long run, presumably due to increased aspirations and ambition (while noting that it led to lower investment in education). Bernard et al. (2014) find that showing four short documentaries of 15 minutes each in which people with a similar background to the target audience in rural Ethiopia increased aspirations for children's education and ultimately higher parents spending on such education and enrolment increase.

Under what Conditions Does Exposure to Information Lead to Behavioral Change?

"When might information lead to more active citizenship?" is the question raised by Lieberman et al. (2014) in a discussion regarding the mixed results across many studies that attempt to assess behavioral change as a result of information exposure (including their null result of the campaign aimed at improving parents' involvement in the education provision in their kids' local

schools). In Figure 3 from their paper (reprinted below), they tailor a series of steps to ask in assesses whether one should surmise that exposure to information would affect behavior. The steps can be broadened or updated to other studies depending on the behavior that policymakers or scholars believe will change as a result of information exposure. Given that taking political actions is quite costly and most people may not be politically active outside of voter turnout in the developing world, it is no small feat to expect that media exposure, especially if a brief, "one-shot" dissemination, would catalyze someone to politically participate.

Figure 1
A theoretical model of the influence of narrative media on individual and social change

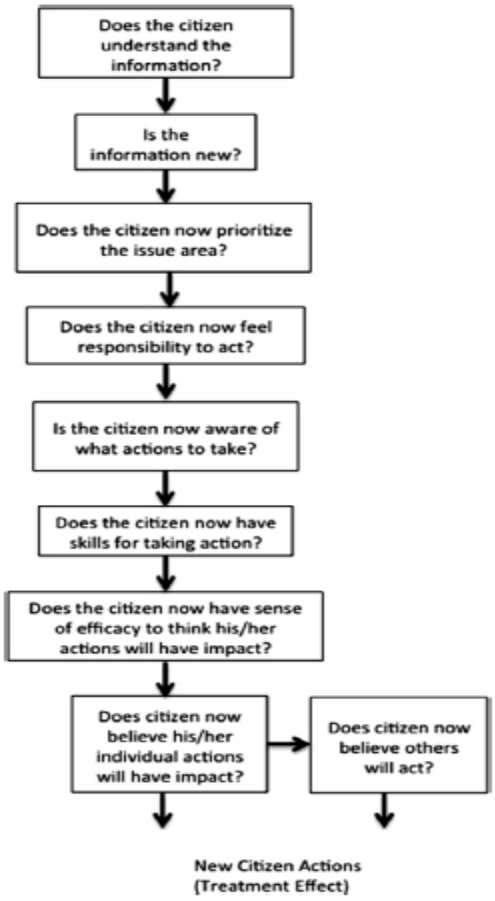

Figure 3. *When Might Information Generate Citizen Action?*

Source: Lieberman et al. 2014.

Lieberman et al. (2014) start off by asking whether the information is understandable and new? Importantly, information should be vetted to see if it is understandable, even for those with the lowest levels of literacy, fluency in the government administrative language, and civic education. It is important to recognize that especially political information may be some of the hardest to understand and process for those that face challenges in these areas. The second set of questions asked, is whether there is reason to believe that the citizen has reprioritized what is important? People are generally busy, especially where folks must work hard to survive as in

impoverished contexts. It may be difficult for media to encourage citizens to re-prioritize their time and money to the area suggested by the media. Given the citizen feels it is a priority to do something, does the citizen feel responsibility to act, know what actions to take, and have the skills to do so? Especially in low-income, new democracies, citizens may not be familiar with ways they can participate or lack the ability to navigate the system. With the ability to act, does the citizen have efficacy that the action will have an impact? Unless the theory of change holds that citizens undertake the actions purely for expressive value, most people will not take political action if they believe it will not change anything. Last, it might be that, in order for a citizen's action to have impact, he or she must be joined by many others, in which case it is important to know whether the citizen believes others will also act.

5. Formal and Civic Education

Less attention has been paid to examining how the media can affect the behavior of government actors. Within this burgeoning scholarship, a number have focused on whether media transparency of government performance improves the efforts politicians expend to perform their job duties and ultimately public services. A second vein of literature has focused on whether media can facilitate the aggregation of citizen preferences to improve the capacity of politicians to represent citizens' interests.

MEDIA EFFECTS ON GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE IN JOB DUTIES AND SERVICE DELIVERY

A number of studies focus on the effect of media coverage of politician performance on subsequent politician performance or public service delivery. At the cross-national level, Djankov et al (2003) demonstrate that state ownership of the media correlates to a number of measures of poor government performance. Grossman and Michelitch (2017) find that disseminating incumbent performance scorecards between elections through community meetings and related physical media improves subsequent politician performance of Ugandan subnational government legislators, but only in competitive constituencies (not in safe seats). Humphreys and Weinstein (2012) had previously attempted a similar study in Uganda at the national level with members of Parliament (MPs), but the MPs derailed the process by publicly discrediting the scorecards. The latter study shows how such transparency initiatives may be contentious and ultimately not incentive compatible with political actors, who have the power to "capture" the information (in this case by discrediting its source). Especially in a more closed media environment, such as Museveni's Uganda (an electoral authoritarian regime) at the national a most high-stakes level, the danger that politicians derail transparency initiatives may be great.

Scholars have also examined the effect of media on public service delivery. Besley and Burgess (2002) show that where more newspaper circulation exists in India, government responsiveness with food aid and disaster relief is greater. Snyder and Stromberg (2010), for example, find that a higher degree of press coverage of elected officials increases the amount of constituency service and federal spending in the USA. Stroemberg (2004) show that New Deal welfare spending is correlated with radio ownership in the USA.

However, Kosack and Fung (2014) review a number of articles that show mixed results in the study of transparency initiatives and political accountability, noting that public service delivery is the results of a "long chain" of accountability relationships across a great many actors at multiple levels of government and both legislative and bureaucratic branches. Grossman and Michelitch (2017) find in the aforementioned study, for example, that the politician scorecard release in competitive constituencies causes more constituency development project spending, an outcome directly under the politicians' control, but find no change in public service delivery outcomes in health and education, which are not under the direct control of politicians.

MEDIA EFFECTS ON GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATION OF CITIZEN PREFERENCES

The second vein of this literature has examined the effect of harnessing the media to improve the flow of information from citizens to elected representatives. One prominent way is through harnessing new media, such as text messaging and the internet. In one set of studies, citizens are encouraged to report policy priorities and public service delivery deficiencies to government via text-message reporting systems. The findings in this area show generally weak results – citizens only poorly utilize the system. However, amongst those that do use the system, they tend to be those that are more politically marginalized such as women and the poor (e.g., Grossman et al 2014) a result that unfortunately does not scale up when the program is expanded (Grossman et al 2016). Such marginalized citizens have been shown to increase usage of reporting to politicians when internal and external efficacy has been boosted (Grossman et al 2016). One assessment is that text-messaging is still too early to be utilized for political participation in rural areas where literacy might be limited. However, a few studies have shown promising uptake. Ugandas “U-Report” system in which over 130,000 anonymous citizens report development information to a crowdsourcing platform has been fairly successful (Blaschke et al 2013). The opinions of the citizens are reported over regular TV, newspaper, and radio, as well as to Members of Parliament. However, the effect of the U-Report system has not been assessed on politician behavior.

The question thus still remains at large as to whether politicians utilize policy priority information from citizens communicated over media, both old and new. In many of the text-messaging studies, politicians tend not to respond to citizen texts. Due to low citizen uptake, many studies have also not sought to identify the effect of the text-messaging program on politician behavior. However, in the USA, Butler and Nickerson (2011) conducted public opinion surveying and sent the public opinion directly to a randomly-assigned half of the New Mexico legislature. They find that legislators are responsive to constituent preferences in their legislative behavior. Clinton and Enamarado (2014) also leverage the geographic spread of Fox News across the USA to examine the response of elected officials, finding that where Fox News spread, elected officials became more conservative, presumably in anticipation of the effect Fox News would have on shifting the opinions of the voters in their constituencies. This area of how politicians may be affected by improved access to media regarding public opinion and policy priorities remains understudied.

6. Conclusion

In this report, we have identified four critical areas of evidence on the role of media in democracy and governance in the developing world: (i) media capture, (ii) media capacity, (iii) media exposure/consumption effects on citizens, and (iv) media exposure/consumption effects on state actors. We conclude by reviewing key challenges to developing policy programs and studying their impact.

Media has long been recognized as critical to democratic development and consolidation. Our report reinforces this message. However, there remain significant obstacles to ensuring media fulfils this role. Media trust is declining throughout the world and developing countries have not been spared in this downturn. Even as the proliferation of private media has grown, confidence in media as an independent information source has not followed. Media still suffers risk of state capture and being converted into a vessel for the ruling party.

The impact of journalist training has emerged as an encouraging way of improving media environments. Higher quality investigation, reporting, and production boost the efficacy of media messages. However, the actual impact of such programs has been hard to assess because evaluation strategies have lacked the analytical power to draw systematic causal inferences. There remain important questions for addressing how study if media capacity building impacts journalists themselves: what kind of training should be provided and where should it be provided? What are the most important outcomes to measure in terms of capacity? How should researchers measure professionalism of journalists when they cannot control the slower, larger-scale change that must occur in the media sector broadly? Vocational training impact evaluations offer some framework which may be useful for studying media capacity building. Still, there remains the challenge of turning media capacity into long-term market viability and financial sustainability of private media.

Lastly, the work on citizen and elite outcomes from media activities offers a great deal of opportunity. Research has demonstrated the media can impact citizen level political outcomes like vote choice and turnout and development outcomes like participation in community groups and citizen activism. It remains difficult to distinguish media effects from broader patterns of modernization sweeping across developing countries throughout the world. In this landscape, where media is often reaching citizens in new and different ways than the developed world, there are also questions regarding how to best connect individuals to media in a way that is ecologically valid and approximates how citizens consume media in everyday life. A contrasting pressure is how to control media exposure and messages in a way that can be assessed through rigorous analytical procedures while accounting for the presence and variability of potential spillover. Such problems are especially pronounced with the rise of new forms of digital. Elite-level outcomes related to media are also tremendously promising—especially in helping citizens close the accountability loop through new ways of contacting politicians and becoming informed about their performance. This research, though, is still very new and leaves much to be explored.

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